## THE OMAHA SUNDAY BEE MAGAZINE PAGE

TWO NIGHTS TO COFFINT TO HIS FAITHLESS WIFE



Mrs. Karl Peterson, the Divorced Wife.

T is not often that real life supplies the peculiar sort of plot required in the hair-raising plays which have made the Theatre Grand Guignol, of Paris, famous the world over. Yet a divorce case just tried in Stockholm, Sweden, presented evidence that shows a faithless wife and her male accomplice to have figured in scenes that could hardly be improved upon at the Grand Guignol, where the essential stage "props" are coffins and shrouds, bottles of vitriol and knives dripping with stage blood.

It is unfortunately true that wives are occasionally faithless in actual life, as well as upon the stage. And the same applies to husbands. Divorce court records reveal many ingenious ruses wherewives and husbands have secured evidence of the faithlessness of their wed-ded partners; but this appears to be the first instance of a husband accomplishing such a feat by having himself pronounced dead and placed in a coffin ready for

That is the feat that was successfully performed by Karl Petersen, a well-to-do citizen of the Swedish capital. Upon evidence thus obtained the court granted him a divorce from the handsome woman to whom he had been married barely a

Owing to her beauty and many char ing accomplishments, Mrs. Petersen's former suitors and admirers were not altogether discouraged by the fact of her marriage to one of the wealthiest merchants of Stockholm. Several of them became frequent guests at the Petersen home. One in particular-a certain dashing young society man named Swen Egstrom-shortly became a recognized family friend of the type that, in this country

and England, is called "tame cat." Several months ago Petersen became suspicious that Egstrom was exceeding his duties as bundle-carrier and general utility man about the house. In fact, he more than half believed that the bond between his charming bride and Egstrom was of a nature that was reflecting upon his own honor. Petersen vainly deavored to prove or disprove his suspicions, and then resolved upon spinning the strangest web in which an erring wife ever was entangled.

He feigned illness and made that an excuse to go to his country house for a few days' rest away from the business and social whirl of the metropolis. He was accompanied only by two or three

old and confidential servants. The day after his arrival in the country, Petersen took to his bed and quietly summoned his confidential physician, to whom he stated his suspicions and outlined the details of his plan. The physician's sympathies were with the hus-

"For a beginning," said Petersen, "I

see my way clear to signing any death certificate.

"How long can you defer your official report of my death?" inquired Petersen. "Will forty-eight hours be long enough?"
"Ample," said Petersen. "I have rea-"Will forty-eight hours be long enough?" cans also have some machine guns can over the garden. It is imposs cumstances the soldier who fires it have reason to believe that within twenty-four the American, and those half in an open space over which a man holding the breech, while the muznours after you have pronounced me dead my wife's paroxysms of grief will have subsided sufficiently to allow her to give me all the evidence I need."

The physician sent the telegram in the afternoon, and a few hours later received Mrs. Petersen's answer that she would the first train and reach her hus-

band's bedside on the next afternoon. Petersen's "illness" had an alarming change for the worse at midnight. At dawn the physician announced to the sorrowing servants that their master had passed away. The butler alone was in the conspiracy, for reasons that will become bylous. But he was naturally melancholy ind, therefore, needed to add merely a ouch more of solemnity to his features.

Petersen being of spare build and enlirely without color in face or hands, it was a simple matter for the physician to add the corpse-like chill and rigidity that would deceive any ordinary beholder. He also undertook the "setting" of a scene in the library that would give the suspected wife every opportunity to betray herself.

A handsome burial casket had been timed to arrive before noon. This was placed on treatles in the library within a yard two of a desk, on which was a tele-

The physician took upon himself the uties of undertaker. Aided by the uneccived butler, he prepared Petersen's orpse-like body for burial and placed it n the casket. The coffin's cover was in wo parts, The lower two-thirds was crewed down, the upper part being left

A Grand Guignol "Thriller" in Real Life, This Unusual and Uncomfortable Stratagem by Which a Rich Swedish Merchant Secured Divorce from the Wife Who Loved Another

thrown back on its hinges, so that sorrowing relatives might view the features of the dead merchant.

These preparations were complete some time before the arrival of Mrs. Petersen. She arrived from the rallway station in an automobile-escorted by the faithful Egstrom. The physician met them at the door.

"My poor, dear husband!" said the wife. "Do tell me that he is better."

bousemaid, visible in the hall, threw her apron over her face and burst into tears. "Calm yourself," said the physician. "Your poor husband suffered very lit-

"Oh, he's dead! My darling husband is dead!" exclaimed Mrs. Petersen.
The grief of the housemaid told all.

Egstrom, the family friend, quietly offaced himself, for the time being. The physician conducted the sorrowing wife into the library. He received her fainting form in his arms-for one glance at the white face in the coffin assured her that fainting was now in order. Then he carried her to her room and delivered her over to the ministrations of the sincerely sorrowing housemaid.

Mrs. Petersen was too much overcome to appear at dinner. The physician found it convenient to remain for the night. It gave him secret pleasure to dine with Egstrom and listen to that gentleman's mournful acknowledgment of the late Petersen's innumerable graces of mind and heart

Mrs. Petersen did not leave her room that night. Egstrom retired early to the

chamber allotted to him.

The butler busied himself in the kitchen behind closed doors preparing a nourishing broth that could be safely taken by a dead man without bringing any tint of life to his cheeks.

The physician watched beside the cof-Toward midnight he was awakened a loud yawn. For a moment, fused by drowsiness, he was startled at the sight of Petersen sitting up in his coffin and drumming impatiently on its lid with his fingers.

"Did she come?" asked Petersen, who, in the interests of the conspiracy, had lain all this time unconscious under the influence of a drug.

"She came," said the physician. "When she gazed on your dead face she fainted -as I was there ready to catch her. We took her to her room, and she hasn't left since. Egstrom was with her, of

"Did the fellow stay?" asked the "corpse," eagerly.

"He did. We dined together and he recalled all your excellent qualities. "Good," said the corpse. "Now kindly tell Olesen to bring me that bowl of broth. I'm famished—and it's my only dead man's chance to eat."

Sitting up in his coffin, with the folded table, Petersen consumed his broth with evident relish. "How about a bit of steak?" he inquired.

The physician promptly vetoed solid food and advanced with his hypodermic "Not yet." pleaded the cornse. "In fact. I won't need any more of your dope. There won't be any more attention paid to me-not till I play my little joker."

"Nothing can happen for six or eight better get some sleep while you can."

"Both, in their natural order," Petersen

came back at the facetious physician.

"Reach into that box on the desk and give

itself through the window the doctor threw down his cards, beaten, "And that disposes of the undertaker's

isfaction. Right here Olesen, the butler, entered noiselessly and whispered;

"Mr. Egstrom is up, ready for break

But these precautions proved unneces-The Petersen country house being isolated, there were no callers. Mrs. Petersen and Egstrom went out for a drive immediately after breakfast. Mrs. Peter sen was sure that the doctor would make all arrangements. She was "too overcome to be of any use." She and her "kind escort" probably would not return until

Petersen returned barely in time for dindeparted immediately after dinner.

But he stuck to his resolution not to risk anything by getting out of his cof-fin. During this long second night the butler was his victim at cribbage. dawn the poor butler was as nearly dead

coffin awaiting developments. Petersen could hear their cheerful conver-

"If you fall asleep naturally you may snore," warned the physician.

"Naturally I won't fail asleep," said the corpse, "From now on this is a wide-awake job."

hours yet," observed the doctor. "You'd But Petersen was restless in his narrow quarters, and to get out to stretch his lega and to get back in again would disarrange the coffin's upholatery. So he suggested a game of cribbage.

"I'll play you for the amount of your bill," he said with a grim smile. "Which bill? Doctor or undertaker?"

So the doctor brought cards and crib bage board, placed them on the folded cof-fin lid, and the game began. The corpse 'pegged" rapidly away from his opponent, winning three straight games.
"That settles the doctor's bill," he said.

They lighted cigars and proceeded with the other half of the contest—best two out of three. As the coming dawn revealed

bill," remarked the corpse with much sat

fast. Mrs. Petersen has ordered her breakfast in her room, sir."

The corpse bobbed down into its coffin. white hands folded across his breast. The doctor threw himself into an easy chair, puffing furiously on a fresh cigar to ac count for the unfunereal atmosphere of

The corpse spent a long day between unsatisfying cat naps and bowls of most inadequate broth. Egstrom and Mrs.

ner, after which they retired to their respective rooms. The physician agreed with the corpse that it might excite suspicions if he remained any longer. So he "Good Lord!" sighed the corpse. "An-

from lack of sleep as the curpse lookedonce more serenely stretched out in his

Those developments came early-immediately after breakfast, which Mrs. Petersen and Egstrom took together in the small breakfast room adjoining the library.



"Petersen sat up in his coffin. Mrs. Petersen and Egstrom, not two yards away, were

After breakfast the unsuspecting couple entered the library, carefully closing the door after them. They barely glanced at the coffin, never once looking inside, where Petersen lay with a most undeathlike flush of exasperation on his counte-

Mrs. Petersen went directly to the telephone. Petersen heard her calling up one of his most intimate business associates. In tones that were so cheerful as to be almost gay she announced the joyous fact of her husband's death. 'The will leaves everything to me, you

know," telephoned Mrs. Petersen. "I shall be rich-and you know what that means, naughty boy!'

Petersen could hardly restrain himself. It was lucky he did, for now he heard the voice of Egstrom tenderly rebuking Mrs. Petersen for holding out false hopes to the

clasped in each other's arms." "fool at the other end of the wire.

"La, la! Let me have my little joke with the old reprobate," said Mrs. Peter-"You know, Duckle, that I love no one but you, and never have." "You darling!"

These two words were uttered in the voice of Egstrom. Petersen sat up in his coffin. Mrs. Petersen and Egstrom, not two yards

away, were clasped in each other's arms. At that instant the butler entered. The exposure was complete, witness included. "Caught!" thundered the corpse, with bony finger pointed at the deceitful Mrs. Petersen, beholding the fearsome

spectacle of her departed husband sitting up in his coffin and so justly denouncing her, fainted in dead earnest. Egstrom was so scared that he let her

fall to the floor. Then he ran from the room and dashed, hatless, from the house Petersen crawled out of the coffin. Alded by the butler, he carried Mrs. Petersen to her room and sent for a physician—for truly she needed one.

When Petersen had regaled himself with a bath and a large steak with plenty of fried potatoes, he went back to the city and started divorce proceedings.

The trial, which promptly freed Petersen, created a sensation. Egstrom nearly collapsed on the witness stand. He is said to be traveling abroad for his health. The divorced Mrs. Petersen is living in strict retirement.

It is reported that the shock of that "Grand Guignol" scene showing her departed husband sitting up in his coffin to accuse her has transformed her from a beauty into a nerve-racked old woman.

## Our New Gun That Can Shoot 400 Mexicans a Minute--and Never Get Hot

HE machine gun is the mostning order as a bright, ingenious solute deadliness of the machine

"I will do that, willingly," said the The United States Army pos- A machine gun is a device that the physician. "And I will manage to make sesses the most deadly of all mature rife bullets continuously and the gun. It is called the Benet-automatically. All the saiding her Mercier gun. ercier gun.

to do is to pull a string or press a sounds and needs no triped like
The Benet-Mercler gun is capable lever and then the bullets fly out, the older machine guns. In an

civilized people are not capable of chine gun is playing its death rain. zle is upheld at the requisite eleva-

killing 400 men a minute. It The man in control can play the emergency it might be rested on the would kill 400 Mexicans a minute stream of bullets over a field just as shoulder of one man and fired by if they got in the way. The Mexi- you scatter the jets of a watering another. But under ordinary cir-

A Single Clip

of 30 Cartridges

Fired by the New

Guns in Less Than

Five Seconds.

keeping the mechanism in good run- The only imperfection in the ab- tion by a pair of steel prongs. Only two men are needed to operate this marvellous weapon. One aims it and pulls the trigger, while the other replaces the spent clips of cartridges with fresh ones as fast as they are used up. Two additional men are required, however, for bringing supplies of the cartridge-clips, each one of which con-tains rifle cartridges with conical

firing 600 bullets a minute—that is and fires it. Thus the process re-to say, at the rate of ten a second, penting itself with almost inconceivcause some time is lost in replacing water from a hose. the spent clips with fresh ones. But ki'ling projectiles per hour-at which present time. Yet the War Depart twenty-four hours each.

matic gun. It is gas-operated. The chanism. Such jams my be caused gas from each powder charge, fol- by heat caused by the enormous aclowing the bullet as it goes through tivity of the mechanism, by dirt acthe barrel, passes through a hole cumulated from the firing, by breakin the bottom of the barrel into the age of parts, due to rapidlty fire, or, chamber beneath the latter. Its ex- in other instances, to irregularities pansion in the chamber presses back in the cartridges. Once in a while land, one from Denmark and two section has one mule, carrying one a piston with a colled apring, the it happens that the primer drops from the United States. Our own machine gun and 1,200 rounds of amrecoil of which ejects the empty cart-out of a cartridge into the mechanism. War Department would rather have munition; also two additional mules.



How One Man Can Manipulate the New Deadly Arm.

actual practice, however, it can able rapidity, the bullets are disdischarge only 400 per minute, be-charged in a continuous stream like

Nothing to compare with the Benct-400 per minute means 24,000 man. Mercler has been known up to the rate the entire population of greater ment does not consider it beyond New York might, theoretically speak- improvement. As a matter of fact, ing, be wiped out by a single Benet- the perfect machine gun has not Merdler in a battle over eight days of yet been developed. All such weapons give trouble now and then with The Benet-Mercier is an auto- "jams," due to stoppages of the me-

clogging the latter. These troubles a foreign gun if it is superlor to have either been eliminated or reduced to a minimum in the Benet-Mercler gun. A sandstorm has been of commission temporarly.

It is ingeniously cooled by the circulation of air around the barrel. A machine gun is of necessity a very complex piece of mechanism. For portability, it must be made light in weight, yet it has to operate under the most trying imaginable conditions, enduring enormously high pressure from the powder charges,

can prove itself better than the Benet- consisting of twenty men detailed Mercier. In this conpetition are ea- from different companies. Each platered two machine rifles from Eng- toon comprises two "sections." Each

an American gun. We want the best possible weapon. The Benet-Mercier s made by a French company, though Benet, one of the inventors, is an American, Our government has secured the right to manufacture it at Springfield; and the Colt Company at Hartford, is equipped for turning

Strange, thought it may seem, the regular army of the United States possesses no machine gun companies. simply for the reason that they have not been authorized by Congress as Even now a competitive test is go- yet. With every regiment of infantry on at the Government arsenal or cavalry in the service, however, Springfield, to see if any gun is a so-called "machine gun platoon,

